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[Editor's Note: I Wrote A Book! Here's the first chapter. Be sure to let me know...](#)

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Chapter 1: Hell and Paradise

St. Lucia is both hell and paradise.

I wondered how I might capture the island's mystique in a way that might register with an American reader.

A place like that is so far off the average American's radar that they have no clue what it's like until they finally visit.

Every time a foreigner comes here, culture shock hits them like a bus—a rude awakening.

After I moved to the U.S. and started working for big influencers like Tony Robbins, any time I felt self-doubt or unworthy, I'd say, "These fools wouldn't have lasted one day in St. Lucia."

And I know I'm right—not one day.

One look at the teacher's stick...

One step into the bathroom at my school...

And 99% of Americans would be on the first flight back to their country!

But I don't want to tell you the bad stuff right now.

After thinking about it, I thought I'd start with Pigeon Point. We begin here for many reasons. Pigeon Point is a little island about half a mile offshore at the northern tip of St. Lucia.

Back then, nobody could access the place without a boat... so most people only got to go there once or twice.

Suddenly, The Pirates of the Caribbean becomes real when you go to Pigeon Point.

On the island stood ruins from St. Lucia's colonial past: old army barracks, an armory, two lookout points at the top of two mountains, and maid's quarters. Cannons littered the place. A couple of old houses and a cemetery rounded out the site. It was a time capsule for the 1700s. Everything was made out of bricks that people don't make anymore, from an archaic type of cement that no longer exists.

Today, the island is connected to the mainland with a causeway constructed in the 80s. So, now, people go there all the time. I had many birthday parties for myself and others there. People get married all the time there. They throw massive concerts and events there.

It's a stunning backdrop. The air there is extra salty. You can detect the vague whiff of sea life wherever you go in the air.

And the winds are heavy and constant—the type of wind you need to propel a sailing ship across the Atlantic.

There's no denying that Pigeon Point is a magical place. I'm sure thousands of babies have been conceived at that place. Erika and I spent lots of time there.

I wanted to start here because Erika and I once went to Pigeon Point, and the strangest thing happened.

Erika was near the shoreline, enjoying the crash of waves in the water. I sat further up the beach, watching her do her thing. Looking down at the sand—at my feet—I saw two dead baby leatherback turtles.

It is a very curious sight. Sea turtles are rarely spotted during the day. When a turtle comes to shore to lay eggs, it's usually very late at night. Likewise, baby turtles head to the sea at night when they hatch.

So, I rarely saw such things in my day-to-day life. I'd lived on the island for most of my life, yet this was still a once-in-a-lifetime moment.

If Discovery Channel hadn't told me about the creatures swimming around in the sea, I probably would never have known most of them existed in St. Lucia.

Maybe that's an exaggeration. Once in a while, a starfish, a pufferfish, or perhaps even a super poisonous translucent jellyfish might wash up on land. But I've never seen a shark in the water—although some have.

These days, scientists are studying a pod of 500 sperm whales in Dominica.

Scientists from Oxford University are using AI to try to decode the sperm whales' language literally. And yes, they speak a real language.

Sperm whales have the largest brains in existence. It's six times bigger than a human's brain. They also make the loudest noise of any animal. Some say their clicks are louder than a jet engine. Others say it can kill you if you're in the water and you're too close. They have distinct names and words for all sorts of things. They hope someday to have the world's first whale-to-human conversation. I can hardly believe that people are doing cutting-edge research like this in my backyard.

Two dead baby turtles. What an odd thing to see.

My mind started noodling over this puzzling mystery.

Why were there two dead baby turtles lying in the sand?

How sad.

Before any conclusions had formed in my mind, I suddenly got the urge to start digging.

I got on my hands and knees and started digging. About a foot deeper, I found another baby turtle. This one was still alive.

“Erika!” I said. “Come see this!”

“What?”

“Come! Come quick!”

“Found a baby turtle, and it's still alive. Come and dig with me. I think there's more.”

Another half a foot, and I found three more. They looked so much cuter in real life—with their miniature shells, big bulbous eyes, and tiny flippers. They were leathery all over—and once they saw the light of day, they started puttering around in the sand.

I kept digging. And we kept finding more turtles. It looked like what happened was the baby turtles weren't strong enough to dig themselves out of the sand when the rest of their siblings hatched. These were the runts of the litter. I bought my theory. The sand was coarse and rough. It was packed tight and cooked from a full day in the sun. Probably not too easy to dig oneself out of. The baby turtles were all in the process of dying before they even got a start at life. How relatable.

I kept digging. From the hole in the ground, I found dozens of golf-ball-sized eggs that had all hatched. And sure enough, there were more baby turtles—a lot more.

“What are we going to do with them?” Erika said.

“Set them free, of course,” I said.

A security guard stopped us, and his bright idea was to bring some of them home. Probably to eat them. So... yeah. There's that.

I sent Erika off to the water with two in hand.

They took to the sea instantly—vanishing into the big blue deep.

Some turtles in the nest were dead, and others were too deep to rescue. However, by the end of that afternoon, Erika and I had rescued at least 25 baby turtles.

What joy—seeing them have a shot at life.

I felt like I'd done something so important that day. Some of the same turtles would return to lay their eggs in a few years. All because I listened to my gut.

What a beautiful day. We couldn't wait to tell Erika's parents all about it.

Until next time,

Anton

Dancer, Writer, Buddhist.



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